

Vision and Frustration of Post WWII Taiwanese Intellectuals: The Case of the Yan-Ping College

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ABSTRACT

When Second World War ended in 1945, the Taiwanese elites in Japan were exultant. They wanted to return as soon as possible and organized the Reborn Taiwan Reconstruction Research Association (RTRRA) so as to make contributions to their homeland. After their return, they established the Yan-Ping College which received enormous welcome from Taiwanese society. However, within less than half a year, the school was ordered to close. During the White Terror of the 1950s, the RTRRA was also forced to dissolve.

By documenting the fate of the above-mentioned groups, the article strives to explore the expectations and disappointments of the Taiwanese intellectuals in the early postwar era. While the education focus of Chen Yi's government was "Chinese-ness," the Yan-Ping College, which was administered by Japanese-educated intellectuals and attended by Taiwanese students, was suspected for teaching regionalism and separatism. The authority sent secret agents to monitor the school, and, after the 2.28 Uprising, found an excuse to shut it down. The Chinese government did not trust Taiwanese intellectuals, would not allow them to meddle in higher education, nor to let the natives design their own curricula. This was the real reason why the Yan-pin College was closed.

In order to forestall the threat of Communism, the Kuomintang government used terrorist means to suppress the Taiwanese society in the 1950s. Even though it was more or less a defunct organization, the RTRRA was requested to dissolve. As so many other Taiwanese intellectuals who were victimized during the White Terror, the instructors and students of Yan-Ping College also suffered deeply in the 1950s. Wanton arrests and murders created a dreadful pall falling all over the island, as the KMT regime decimated a generation of talented and better-educated Taiwanese. But the horror had also alienated the populace for the years to come.

Keywords: the Reborn Taiwan Reconstruction Research Association (RTRRA), the Yan-Ping College, the 228 Uprising, the White Terror.